

1 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
2
3 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD
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5 OFFICE OF MARINE SAFETY
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10 In the Matter of: :
11 :
12 MAJOR MARINE ACCIDENT :
13 COLLISION JAPANESE FISHERIES : NTSB Project ID
14 TRAINING VESSEL EHIME MARU AND : No. 51701
15 U.S. NAVY NUCLEAR ATTACK : DCA01MM022
16 SUBMARINE USS GREENVILLE :
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24 Recorded Interview of MICHAEL "MICKUI" NOLAN.
25

26
27 Monday,
28 February 19, 2001
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30 BEFORE:

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32 INTERVIEWERS:
33 GARY ABE
34 NTSB
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1 EXAMINATION BY

2 GARY ABE

3 (Time: 1340.)

4 MR. ABE: My name is Gary Abe. And today
5 is Monday, February 19, 2001. And I'm with Michael
6 Nolan, and he has given consent to have this
7 interview tape-recorded. And it's 10 after 7 p.m.

8 Michael, do you want me to call you
9 "Mickui", or Michael?

10 MR. NOLAN: Either. Mickui is fine.

11 MR. ABE: Okay, Mickui. What I'd like you
12 to do is just start off giving me your name and your
13 address. And from that point on, I'd just like you
14 to sort of describe your day on the USS Greenville
15 from the time that you got on board until the time
16 that you departed.

17 And just sort of tell your story in as much
18 detail as you remember. And if there are some
19 questions that I have to clarify anything, I'll ask
20 you at that point. Okay?

21 MR. NOLAN: Um-hum.

22 MR. ABE: Okay, let's go ahead and start.

23 MR. NOLAN: My name is Michael Nolan. Many
24 people would call me Mickui, M-i-c-k-u-i.

25 I live at (omitted).

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On February, the 9th, we had an early morning departure on the USS Greenville, somewhere around 7-8 o'clock in the morning. We were met at the parking lot outside of the Pearl Harbor base gate and escorted by a representative from the Navy, a person by the name of Rowena, to the subdock.

When we got there, we parked our vehicles there and we were greeted by the Captain, Captain Waddle, and the Chief of Staff as our escort at the sub. That's the Chief of Staff of the submarine base, under Rear Admiral Konetzni.

When we met the Captain, he introduced himself to us and he had a few words for all of us.

He told us that-- he actually entreated us to speak to any member of the crew that we wanted to, that his crew would be forthcoming with any information, as long of course as it was not classified. And that probably -- in a joking way -- that we wouldn't be able to shut them up because they were so proud of what they did, and they were very confident with their jobs.

And, basically, with that then we went aboard the ship, the submarine.

We all went down into the sub while it was

1 docked at port. And the sub got underway. As it
2 was underway, we were then asked if we would like to
3 go up above deck, and we did.

4 At this point, we were just starting to
5 leave Pearl Harbor. We were going through Pearl
6 Harbor coming up past the Battleship Missouri. The
7 Harbor, of course, is very calm.

8 And even though it was very calm, you tend
9 to stand in the middle of the submarine because
10 there's nothing to hold on to. And it's kind of an
11 intimidating experience, especially if you're not I
12 guess a submariner.

13 My wife and I stood near the main sail
14 because we could at least lean against that. That
15 gave us some stability. And I recall as we left
16 that the Captain's wife was on shore. As we were
17 passing, they exchanged greetings.

18 Before we had left, he had also mentioned
19 that many people do make some calls to their friends
20 and relatives when they take this trip out, so we
21 thought that would be a great idea.

22 So we called my mother in New York and let
23 her know that we were going out, and called Susan's
24 dad. And as we got past the Missouri and started
25 getting out to the mouth of Pearl Harbor, then we

1 were asked to go below decks again. So, we did
2 that.

3 After we went below decks, it seems to me I
4 think we went back to the crew's mess. That's where
5 we had initially gone when we went down into the
6 sub. We went to the crew's mess.

7 We stayed in the crew's mess for a while
8 and then the opportunity came for us to go above to
9 the conning tower in twos and fours. And I believe
10 Susan and I were the last two of the group to go
11 there.

12 So everyone was geared up with equipment so
13 that we would be able to be attached to something
14 there. We would be secured, without falling off.

15 So we were all -- it was enlisted men, but
16 they suited us all up and made sure that all the
17 straps were properly aligned and tightened and that
18 we were secure.

19 Then we climbed up to I guess it's the
20 conning tower. When we got up to the conning tower,
21 we were met by the Captain. And he was very
22 cordial, spoke about his Naval career and his
23 family. I almost felt like I learned his whole life
24 story, which was remarkable I thought that he was so
25 forthcoming with everything.

1 He felt very comfortable with us. He was I
2 guess even smoking a cigar with John Hall, a half a
3 one. He had a couple of puffs. I guess he likes
4 his cigars.

5 So, in the course of that conversation,
6 because he really got into this whole thing -- and I
7 guess it was mostly not because of myself and Susan
8 being there, but the other two couples I think were
9 close to his town, where he came from in Texas.

10 So he really got into a discussion about
11 they went to the same schools, and things like that.

12 And I guess that's why he got so into his whole
13 life with them, because he related to them.

14 And we wound up staying up there probably a
15 lot longer than most anybody else did. Almost to
16 the point that they kept telling him that it was
17 time for us to go down. And he would say, "Well,
18 I'm not finished with my story yet."

19 But, eventually, we did then go back down
20 again. And we got out of our gear and we were
21 actually -- took our gear off in the Captain's
22 cabin. And we remained in the Captain's cabin for
23 some time.

24 MR. ABE: As a group?

25 MR. NOLAN: No, just the four of us, the

1 last four of us that were there. Everyone was kind
2 of on these little tours, I think, you know, with
3 someone as a guide, you know, walking about the
4 submarine, learning different things about the
5 submarine.

6 So then, after that we toured the ship as
7 well. We went through the crew's quarters and then
8 down I believe into the torpedo room. In the
9 torpedo room, of course, at each place we got
10 briefings on all of the workings of that particular
11 station, what they did in the torpedo room.

12 We also had a demonstration of I guess they
13 fired some slugs. And about four of the people had
14 a hands-on thing where they were able to fire the
15 slug and get that -- put the equipment on us, and
16 everything was done in a very professional manner.

17 You know, letting us know beforehand what
18 to expect, the sounds, the pressure, that we were
19 all equipped with the head gear so that we wouldn't
20 have any damage to our ears.

21 Then I think also what had happened was we
22 were given the opportunity to climb into the torpedo
23 tube, which I declined. A little large for a
24 torpedo tube. But, one of our party did, and they
25 gave him some coveralls, and he climbed on down

1 there.

2 And he wrote his name down at the very end
3 of the torpedo tube with his little flashlight. And
4 I believe there was one of the Kennedys had written
5 in there.

6 So I was very impressed that he had the
7 nerve to go down there. But, he was happy to come
8 out when he did come out.

9 MR. ABE: I'm sure of that.

10 MR. NOLAN: So, let's see. What happened?

11 After the torpedo room, we went up to, let's see, I
12 think the sonar room. We walked up through the ship
13 and so we got a briefing in the sonar room with all
14 of the equipment and saw how that worked.

15 From the sonar room, then we went into the
16 control room. We stayed there until lunch. And I
17 can recall that -- I think it was second-in-command
18 Pfeifer was rather anxious because we were all
19 rather hungry.

20 And I guess the Captain had gotten into
21 another discussion. I think he was having lunch
22 with John Hall and his wife and Mr. Clary and his
23 wife.

24 So they had spent probably more time than
25 they normally have at lunch. And they kept trying

1 to send the word down that would kind of gently
2 nudge the Captain to, you know, "We're starving up
3 here. We'd like to have lunch."

4 So, eventually, though, it was our turn to
5 go down to the Officer's mess. And we ate with Mr.
6 Pfeifer. He was sitting next to me on my right at
7 the head of the table, the Captain's seat. And Mr.
8 Meador. He was sitting at the other end of the
9 table. I guess they were the next two senior
10 officers above the submarine.

11 MR. ABE: Mickui, before we go, can you
12 talk about what you all did in the control room at
13 this point, during this tour?

14 MR. NOLAN: Well, let's see. As I can
15 recall, we looked at all of the controls. You know,
16 we saw the two seats where the people drive the
17 submarine. There were conversations going on and
18 explanations going on about what they did, what all
19 of these controls were.

20 And, of course, any questions that we had
21 with regards to those instruments or what-have-you,
22 they were answered for us and explained to us.

23 There was a number of people of course in
24 the control room -- the plotter doing his job, and
25 some people were talking to him and getting

1 explanations from him of what his job was.

2 They were working with the periscope as
3 well. And I believe some people had an opportunity
4 to take a look out the periscope. I believe I did
5 as well. I looked at the periscope.

6 What else? I guess, after we had gotten
7 these general briefings in there, we were just kind
8 of waiting to go to lunch. So I didn't feel that it
9 was any more of a briefing than any of the other
10 places that we went to.

11 It was all very detailed and any interest
12 you had, you spoke to them. I think I spoke to some
13 extent with the Officer of the Deck there about a
14 whole variety of things. You know, about Navy life,
15 about the submarine life.

16 About, you know, how they coped with
17 different things, and what they did for exercise.
18 Just to find out about the men and what it was like
19 to be on a submarine. And, you know, how they were
20 able to cope with being confined, and how long they
21 were at sea.

22 And, really, just learning all about them,
23 you know. That was one of the big things about the
24 trip, to learn about these men who were out there
25 really protecting us, serving our country.

1 And to be able to learn about that, and
2 then take that information and bring it back to
3 other civilians that don't have that opportunity to
4 let them know at least through this method about
5 what it's all about.

6 And I was very impressed. I was impressed
7 with the fact that a lot of them were very young, in
8 my mind. But, at the same time, their youth didn't
9 in any way infringe upon their professionalism,
10 their expertise in their jobs.

11 It was extremely obvious that they were
12 extremely competent at what they did. Just by the
13 way they answered questions and the knowledge, the
14 depth of knowledge, they had about everything.

15 There was never anyone that said: I don't
16 know. They always had the answer. So that was very
17 impressive, made you feel like very secure with
18 where you were.

19 And you forgot, if you had any
20 claustrophobic feelings, that you were confined. I
21 had to -- Susan may have told you this, my wife,
22 that she had some reservations about doing this.

23 MR. ABE: She did.

24 MR. NOLAN: And, you know, I tried to
25 explain to her that this would be a once in a

1 lifetime opportunity for her. And that it was not
2 like being in a World War II submarine where you're
3 in a little tube or something because she has
4 claustrophobic tendencies.

5 And so I didn't push her but, you know, I
6 tried to let her make her own mind. But, she
7 finally did. And I -- with the exception of what
8 happened, I'm sure she was very happy that she did.

9 MR. ABE: Yes. She, I think, other than
10 the accident, she was really glad that she did.

11 MR. NOLAN: Yes, because she learned a lot.
12 That's what I think it was all about, to get
13 someone who doesn't have the opportunity to have
14 this kind of experience. I mean it's like a sponge
15 that you're just soaking up all of this knowledge
16 and first-hand experience.

17 It's one thing if somebody tries to tell
18 you a story. But, to be there, to see the things,
19 to see the people who are actually being part of it,
20 I don't think you can get into a better learning
21 experience.

22 And, for an adult, it's like going to
23 school, really, but you learn immediately. You
24 know, you're not learning ABC because you already
25 know that.

1 And you can ask questions. You know, some
2 of the questions initially that she brought up, you
3 know, no one would have thought of:

4 "Why aren't there any women on board this
5 submarine?" It became a big issue. The Chief of
6 Staff said, "Well, we'll address this question again
7 later, and you may have come up with the answer by
8 then, or many answers why they weren't.

9 In fact, I came up with what I thought was
10 a very good answer, because I had to wait for one of
11 the wives in the head. And, you know, women have a
12 tendency to spend a little bit more time than the
13 men do. You get in and you're out, and they seem to
14 dally.

15 And when you have to go, you know, you're
16 just kind of dancing around.

17 That was another reason why I appreciated
18 the men there because, you know, they didn't just
19 kind of leave you hanging, you know. One of the
20 fellows walking by me could see my anxiety.

21 He said, "Follow me, sir." He took me up
22 to another place where I could get to a head. And
23 so I was very grateful for that.

24 And so they were very, very helpful. They
25 never left you alone. You always had someone around

1 that was there that was escorting you or talking to
2 you or helping you with where you wanted to go, to
3 be.

4 So I think, from that standpoint, it was
5 very important. I know that, in the press, it's
6 come out that it may have been a distraction. Some
7 people have said, well, they could have distracted
8 them from their duties.

9 But, I feel that, you know, this is not the
10 first time that these people have done this. And
11 that even in doing this and having other people on
12 board, they were very professional in that.

13 It didn't distract from what they had to
14 do. That had the priority. Any time there was all
15 about what their job was, that's where they were
16 completely at.

17 And not that we would even want to distract
18 them from them doing their job because you would
19 feel that might imperil you, but you never felt
20 that. I don't think anyone in the group ever felt
21 at any time that there was anything that they had to
22 worry about.

23 That's how confident they made you feel.
24 So I think that's important to mention.

25 MR. ABE: Okay, let's go ahead. Before I

1 stopped you for this clarification, you were going
2 down into the crew's decks.

3 MR. NOLAN: So then we went to have lunch.
4 And, as I said, Mr. Pfeifer sat on my right. He
5 was at the Captain's seat at the head of the table,
6 and Mr. Meador was at the other end. My wife was
7 there.

8 The other bulk of the civilians, the other
9 half of the group, was there. And we wound up
10 having a great lunch and a great conversation and,
11 again, talking about everything under the sun,
12 appreciating the food that was brought to us.

13 The people that were serving from the mess,
14 talking to them. So it was very, very pleasant, so
15 much so that I think we probably stayed there --
16 also stayed there rather long, because we got the
17 message that, you know, the Captain was -- time was
18 running out.

19 MR. ABE: Right.

20 MR. NOLAN: He was going to do the final
21 maneuvers and, you know, we've got to come up to the
22 control room. Because it was approaching -- I think
23 he was supposed to come back around 2 o'clock,
24 something like that.

25 So, we, in fact --

1 MR. ABE: By back, you mean back to?

2 MR. NOLAN: Back to Pearl Harbor.

3 So we went up to the control room, and
4 that's when they went through these maneuvers. I
5 think they called it the angles and dangles.

6 And as far as you had asked me for where I
7 was standing when we were in the control room, I was
8 on the -- I guess it's the starboard side where the
9 firing panel is?

10 MR. ABE: Right.

11 MR. NOLAN: And I was standing right next
12 to the passageway into the sonar room.

13 MR. ABE: Okay.

14 MR. NOLAN: In fact, when we hit some of
15 these angles and dangles, it was obvious we had to
16 hold on to something, but I was watching the other
17 seamen and I just noticed they just leaned the other
18 way.

19 And so, if you balanced yourself, you
20 really didn't have to hold on to anything. And so
21 Susan, my wife, was of course holding on. And I was
22 making sure I had a good grip on her so she didn't
23 go flying the other way.

24 I said, "Susan, just lean this way." And I
25 was very proud of myself that, look, I've got my

1 sealegs. Here I just lean this way, and that was a
2 great experience in and of itself.

3 And it was very impressive that the force
4 of that boat, how it could maneuver through the
5 water. And you could appreciate the maneuvers by
6 the way it moved and your balance changed.

7 The Captain had even made something before
8 he started his maneuvers, a statement to the effect
9 that:

10 "You know, we'll see how well the crew is
11 prepared for this. I don't want to hear any things
12 falling, and everything should be secure, and this
13 will be a test for them."

14 And so we went through all of those
15 maneuvers. From where I was standing, I was facing
16 into the control room. And some of the angles
17 sometimes actually had me leaning through the entry
18 way into the sonar room because of the distinctness
19 of the way they were going up and down.

20 I was looking at the Captain. The Captain
21 was right at the periscopes, right in front of the
22 periscopes, looking at the entire control panel from
23 about where the first guy steering sits for the
24 second guy steering and focusing, you know, very
25 intently on the panel and giving the commands and

1 the orders about what exactly they were doing.

2 MR. ABE: At this point, all the guests
3 were observers.

4 MR. NOLAN: Yes.

5 MR. ABE: No one was sitting in any
6 operating seats?

7 MR. NOLAN: No. Mr. Hall was sitting like
8 -- there was a seat that was like facing the next
9 passageway that went to the -- that came through
10 from the mess hall. I guess it was the middle one.
11 It was next to the first steering position.

12 MR. ABE: Okay.

13 MR. NOLAN: And I think Mr. Clary was
14 sitting there next to him as well.

15 So, as we were going through all of these
16 angles and dangles, we were all just observers.

17 MR. ABE: So the helm and the plane were by
18 the crew.

19 MR. NOLAN: Yes.

20 MR. ABE: And then the seats off to the
21 side looking into the entrance, looking from the
22 periscope to the entrance, that --

23 MR. NOLAN: There were some seats right in
24 front. I mean it's like not at the periscope but in
25 front of that whole structure there, almost right in

1 front of the doorway entrance.

2 MR. ABE: Okay.

3 MR. NOLAN: And I don't know if those seats
4 were supposed to be there or if they put them there
5 for them.

6 MR. ABE: There was three? There were
7 three seats?

8 MR. NOLAN: But I know that they were
9 sitting there. And, it seemed to be, you know, the
10 easiest way, they didn't have to really worry about
11 holding on to anything because they were sitting
12 down and the seats were secure.

13 And so they didn't have to hold on to
14 something when they went through these maneuvers.

15 MR. ABE: Okay.

16 MR. NOLAN: Then we came to the point where
17 they were going to do the emergency blow. This was
18 the last event before we were ready to do back into
19 Pearl Harbor.

20 I know this is an important time. Again,
21 as I said, I was standing facing the Captain.

22 MR. ABE: Do you have any idea about what
23 time this is we're talking about now?

24 MR. NOLAN: I never looked at a clock on
25 that whole trip. I mean you were just so intense

1 with everything that was going on.

2 MR. ABE: Sure.

3 MR. NOLAN: And the experience, it was just
4 riveting.

5 MR. ABE: Okay.

6 MR. NOLAN: But I was just really intent
7 on, I mean, the Captain was the man in charge. He
8 really had my attention.

9 And I know that they went up to periscope
10 depth again so they could check to see if there was
11 anything out there.

12 And I'm not sure which officer or crewman
13 did it first, but one of the crew did the first 360
14 degree look.

15 That was immediately followed by the
16 Captain, who did two 360-degree looks. And he
17 didn't just quickly do it either. He stopped and
18 looked, and stopped and looked. And as he went
19 around, this other crewman walked on like opposite
20 him.

21 If the Captain was on that side of the
22 periscope, as it moved around, this crewman just
23 walked with him. And so that was the procedure that
24 happened.

25 Then, the Captain left the control room and

1 went through that door where Mr. Hall was seated
2 next to the helmsman and came into the sonar room.

3 MR. ABE: Okay.

4 MR. NOLAN: And I know that because, like I
5 said, I was standing in the doorway of the sonar
6 room. Then of course I see him there, and he
7 started checking the sonar, I guess, looking to see
8 if he could see anything there. And he was in there
9 for a while.

10 Then he came --

11 MR. ABE: So the CO went into the sonar
12 room?

13 MR. NOLAN: Yes. Yes.

14 MR. ABE: Okay.

15 MR. NOLAN: Went into the sonar room,
16 checked that. Then, after he was in there for a
17 while and checked that, he came out and took his
18 position again where he was before.

19 I believe that Mr. Pfeifer remained in the
20 sonar room and said, "Okay, I will watch the sonar
21 while, you know, you are on the bridge," or whatever
22 they call that.

23 It was at that time that he had made an
24 announcement at some point in time before that
25 asking Mr. Hall if he would like to do the emergency

1 blow. And Mr. Hall said yes, he would.

2 And he asked Mr. Clary if he would like to
3 sit at the -- I guess that's the helmsman, his seat.
4 And he said okay.

5 And he said, "I'll tell you when to get up
6 from those seats to do this."

7 So, when they were ready to do this
8 procedure, then Mr. Hall got up and went to the port
9 side to where these mechanisms are.

10 MR. ABE: Right.

11 MR. NOLAN: So I'm looking at him and I see
12 his back. He's up there like this, his hands on the
13 instruments.

14 And let's see, who else did something?
15 Todd Thoman's wife, I believe it was, Deanda.

16 MR. ABE: Todd? What's her name?

17 MR. NOLAN: Deanda. With a "D".

18 MR. ABE: Okay.

19 MR. NOLAN: She did, you know, I guess they
20 sounded this horn like three times. And so she did
21 that. And, actually, she had to be assisted with
22 that because she couldn't press it hard enough, I
23 guess, and so one of the crewman held her hand while
24 they did that, three times.

25 Then, Mr. Hall, you know, I forget what he

1 said. He said something about getting ready to do
2 the emergency blow. And then he hit the valves and
3 you could hear the ballast I guess being flooded, or
4 expelled, or whatever it does, and counted out then
5 "one, 1,000..." something. He was yelling out some
6 numbers.

7 MR. ABE: This is Mr. Hall?

8 MR. NOLAN: Yes, Mr. Hall.

9 And Mr. Clary was at that point in time in
10 the helmsman seat as well. And then we started to
11 go up. And --

12 MR. ABE: Let me ask you this.

13 MR. NOLAN: Yes.

14 MR. ABE: Make this point.

15 What type of supervision was Mr. Hall and
16 Mr. Clary, I guess? Were there crew members near
17 by?

18 MR. NOLAN: Almost on top of them.

19 MR. ABE: Can you describe that?

20 MR. NOLAN: Well, whoever the men were that
21 normally would do that, I mean they were right
22 there. They were telling him exactly what to do.
23 And it was almost a hands on hands kind of scenario.

24 I couldn't really see Mr. Clary as clearly
25 as I saw Mr. Hall because he was kind of -- Mr.

1 Clary was kind of -- his position was kind of
2 obscured from me.

3 Especially when we were in this ascent.

4 MR. ABE: Okay.

5 MR. NOLAN: Once we started going up, I
6 think -- and I can't really remember specifically
7 but I think they were calling out either the speed
8 or as we were going, so we got the sensation of the
9 feeling of just how fast this boat was going up.

10 MR. ABE: For instance, for Mr. Clary and
11 Mr. Hall, when you said the crew members were almost
12 on top of him, was that like -- can you describe
13 that in a sense of -- like for Mr. Clary, who was in
14 the helmsman's seat, was he driving the boat?

15 MR. NOLAN: I couldn't tell. I mean he was
16 sitting in the seat.

17 MR. ABE: Okay.

18 MR. NOLAN: And I really didn't look that
19 much upon it because, you know, like I said, he was
20 kind of obscured. And because he wasn't saying
21 anything, you know, it didn't look like he was doing
22 anything.

23 So, you know, my attention was not drawn to
24 him at all. But I knew that he was in the seat
25 because he was told that now is the time for him to

1 go sit in the seat, just before that maneuver.

2 And I can remember Mr. Hall calling out and
3 his hands spread like this on these instruments to
4 blow the ballast, or whatever it was.

5 MR. ABE: Was there a crew member who also
6 had his hands on the switches?

7 MR. NOLAN: I can't remember.

8 MR. ABE: Okay.

9 MR. NOLAN: I can't remember. I can't say
10 that I actually see that in my mind.

11 MR. ABE: Okay. Fine.

12 MR. NOLAN: Anything else?

13 MR. ABE: No.

14 MR. NOLAN: So we're going up and as we
15 were -- you could feel that we had broken the
16 surface because it was like the incline, the
17 steepness of the incline kind of fell off as the
18 boat was coming up on to the surface.

19 And it seemed just as that happened, we get
20 this huge boom. I mean it was a boom. The way --
21 that's how they must have come up with this word
22 "boom"--

23

24 -- because literally and it was a loud
25 boom. And I could visibly see the Captain, you

1 know, react to it. And as Mr. Hall had said, his
2 words were, "Jesus, what the hell was that?"

3 And in the next instance, there was maybe
4 two or three seconds -- not even two or three
5 seconds. Maybe, a second or two -- all of a sudden
6 then, the whole boat shuddered.

7 And in retrospect, I realize now that what
8 that was the stern, fin, whatever they call that,
9 that had to be hitting the boat.

10 What I thought was happening, what scared
11 me at that time -- I was not as scared of the boom
12 as I was of the shudder. I thought the submarine
13 was breaking apart.

14 And so I, you know, you get that initial
15 feeling of, you know, panic.

16 MR. ABE: Right.

17 MR. NOLAN: So that subsided when I didn't
18 see any water or anything coming in. And we were
19 immediately, I mean the crew went into like
20 instantaneous reaction.

21 And we were immediately taken off the --
22 out of the control room and taken to the crew's
23 mess.

24 MR. ABE: When you say -- can you describe
25 what the crew's reaction was? I mean you said they

1 immediately...?

2 MR. NOLAN: I mean it was -- I think it was
3 Mr. Pfeifer came out of the sonar room and took his
4 position on the bridge there.

5 The Captain stepped back.

6 Who else was there? The Chief of Staff was
7 on the starboard side also. And I think he stepped
8 back so as to kind of get out of the way so that,
9 you know, all the men could do their job.

10 So it's like everybody just kind of sprung
11 into action to handle whatever this emergency was.

12 MR. ABE: Was Mr. Clary still in his seat?

13 MR. NOLAN: I don't know.

14 MR. ABE: Okay.

15 MR. NOLAN: I don't know. I was the last
16 one to leave there. But I mean we were out of there
17 in it seemed like seconds.

18 MR. ABE: Okay.

19 MR. NOLAN: And, as I said, we were
20 escorted back down into the crew's mess. I think
21 Mr. Hall was in front of me at some point in time.
22 Actually, he was in front of me when we left the
23 crew's mess.

24 We got into the crew's mess and the thing
25 that -- I don't know if the word is "shocked" or it

1 surprised me or that I was amazed to see was that
2 they had these monitors on, you know, the screens
3 that show what's going on on the surface.

4 And the shock was there was this boat
5 there.

6 MR. ABE: You saw the boat?

7 MR. NOLAN: Oh, yes. That's -- the fact
8 that I was seeing it, I said "Why are they not
9 looking at this? Do they actually know that this is
10 on?"

11 And we were just like mesmerized by this
12 thing. And the size of this boat, I mean the waves,
13 it was really choppy and this thing was just
14 bouncing around.

15 Almost as soon as we got in there and sat
16 down, the crew was rushing in to the mess with all
17 kinds of equipment and setting up, you know, to take
18 care of any emergency, any survivors, any people
19 that were injured.

20 And so it was obvious that they had to get
21 us out of there. In the meantime, this -- this
22 vessel is going down. So, as we're leaving and
23 everybody is leaving, I was the last one to leave
24 the crew's mess.

25 And I stopped at the door to wait. I don't

1 know why I had to see it but I had to see that ship
2 go down. And that was the last thing I saw before I
3 left there, was that it went on down.

4 MR. ABE: How long do you think it took?

5 MR. NOLAN: I don't think it took more than
6 five minutes, to tell you the truth. It was fast.
7 It went down.

8 MR. ABE: Did you see any --

9 MR. NOLAN: Survivors?

10 MR. ABE: -- survivors?

11 MR. NOLAN: That was the other thing that
12 later occurred to me. I said, "You know, all I
13 could see was the ship. I couldn't literally see
14 any people." I don't know if they were too small or
15 what, but it was just that boat there.

16 And the thing that impressed me was it, you
17 know, looked like a big boat. It wasn't just a
18 little, tiny boat. And it went down extremely fast.

19 From the time that we -- I'm sure that it
20 wasn't more than five minutes. So, later, when we
21 were actually back out on top of the submarine and
22 we could see the damage to the tail of the sub where
23 all of the paint was removed from it, then it was
24 obvious was the shudder was that part of the
25 submarine must have been cutting through the hull of

1 that boat.

2 And I would think that that's why it went
3 down so fast. I mean I'm not an expert by any means
4 but my own logic will tell me that a vessel of that
5 weight moving through the water that fast coming up
6 and hitting anything is not going to be stopped by
7 anything. That had to be like a knife cutting
8 through that hull.

9 And it must have just "ssshhsss" cut right
10 through it, and that's why it went down so fast.

11 I don't think that the initial boom was
12 anything more than possibly a dent in both hulls.
13 But I think that rudder going through, that whole
14 shuddering of the boat, was, you know, until you
15 look at that other boat, we're not going to really
16 know.

17 But, if I were to take a guess, that's what
18 I would guess. I mean it may have been that when
19 the hulls collided, they put a big hole in it.

20 But, I think that the real damage may have
21 come from that. Again, that's all speculation on my
22 part just from what I saw of the damage to, you
23 know, because it was like the paint was all removed
24 from it. And I was amazed it wasn't bent or
25 anything like that.

1 That thing must be one solid piece.

2 MR. ABE: During that time you were in the
3 crew's mess, was the intercom on? And, if so --

4 MR. NOLAN: Did we hear anything?

5 MR. ABE: Can you remember conversations
6 and--

7 MR. NOLAN: I was so mesmerized by this
8 ship. I mean I just could not believe it. I mean I
9 was literally in disbelief that I was seeing this
10 boat there because, in my mind, I said, "How could
11 we have hit anything? How could we not know that --
12 this is a military submarine. This is what they do.
13 How could we not know?"

14 And the thing that occurred to me was, you
15 know, is that it had to be a sonar problem. I mean
16 I would have thought that that's what sonar is for,
17 to detect other boats.

18 I mean if this was -- if we were at war,
19 you certainly wouldn't want to come up under the
20 enemy like that, would you?

21 MR. ABE: No.

22 MR. NOLAN: So that's, in my mind, that's
23 what I thought had happened. That there was
24 something wrong with the sonar, because they went
25 through everything. I mean they didn't do anything

1 in a haphazard manner.

2 The Captain was very, very thorough. I was
3 extremely impressed with how loyal his crew was to
4 him. They had a special bond where he called up --
5 he didn't call him "ensign" or "private" or
6 whatever. He called them "Shipmates". You know,
7 "Shipmate."

8 And he was like a teacher. You know, any
9 time he had to tell somebody something, he would --
10 he had a special way of doing it.

11 And we found with talking to, I mean, there
12 were some senior chiefs there that had had many
13 years' experience. Some of the crew didn't have
14 that much experience. I mean enough so they were
15 responsible where they were, but obviously this was
16 important training for them as well.

17 I think they were getting ready to go out
18 on a mission. And so having this kind of training
19 was not for our benefit, it was for their benefit.

20 I even believe, in speaking to one of the
21 crew, one of them had mentioned that, you know, he
22 had gotten out of the Submarine Corps and was doing
23 other things in the Navy, but came back because of
24 Captain Waddle, just to serve under him.

25 So, obviously, he commanded a tremendous

1 amount of respect and confidence from his men. And
2 we were -- I think he spoke to everyone. I'm sure.

3 I would be very surprised if every civilian that
4 you've spoken to has had nothing but glowing things
5 to say about this Captain.

6 We all feel, as badly as we feel for the
7 people that lost their lives and the people that had
8 to go into the water, we feel just as bad for him
9 because here's a man that seemed to me to be on his
10 way to a fantastic career.

11 He had Admiral stamped all over him. And
12 to have it snatched away in an instant is almost --
13 almost an Act of God because for the life of me,
14 reason cannot explain to me how this happened.

15 It wasn't because of neglect, that's for
16 sure.

17 MR. ABE: In going back, do you remember
18 hearing anything on the intercoms while you were in
19 there?

20 MR. NOLAN: As I said --

21 MR. ABE: No?

22 MR. NOLAN: -- I was just so riveted by
23 this whole experience, this disbelief of this boat
24 being there, that we had hit it, it was surreal.

25 MR. ABE: Can you -- do you remember, or

1 can you describe your thoughts on I guess the
2 environment in the ship at that time?

3 I mean were people -- the type of activity,
4 I guess, that was going on?

5 MR. NOLAN: Well, now that you mention it,
6 now you did remind me of something that I do recall
7 that was announced over the speakers.

8 And it was the Captain telling them to go
9 about their jobs, to be calm in doing it, to take it
10 back a notch. They had trained for these
11 circumstances and to do the jobs that they were
12 trained for in the most professional way that they
13 knew how to. And just do everything by the numbers.

14 So it was kind of a calming thing to his
15 crew because the crew, I mean their adrenalin was
16 up. I mean this is something that no one, you know,
17 vaguely, even in their wildest imagination
18 anticipated or expected.

19 But, when we went down from the crew's
20 room, we went down to the torpedo room. John Hall
21 and myself, we even helped out by -- there's like a
22 gaff that they have there. And we helped untie the
23 gaff. I took the gaff and helped him to take it up
24 topside.

25 We just stayed there. Periodically, we'd

1 have the -- the Chief of Staff would come down and
2 give us a report.

3 MR. ABE: Where were you at this time now?

4 MR. NOLAN: In the torpedo room.

5 MR. ABE: Okay.

6 MR. NOLAN: I was standing right at the
7 door to the torpedo room, so I was the first one to
8 come through.

9 The doctor came down, the guy that they
10 call "Doc", the medic, and he brought down seasick
11 pills. That sub on top of the surface was just
12 rocking and rolling. So the women and the men were,
13 you know, getting to that point where they were
14 turning green.

15 So he was there for anybody that needed any
16 help. He brought some water down. He passed some
17 pills around to whoever needed them.

18 And then, at one time, I can't recall who
19 it was that came down -- oh, it was one of the black
20 shipman. He came down and asked if anybody had a
21 phone because I think they were having trouble with
22 their radio. They were having difficulty reaching
23 the men.

24 So they figured if somebody has a phone,
25 they could make, you know, an international call.

1 So John Hall gave them his phone and I gave
2 them mine. And they came back in a matter of
3 minutes with our phones because they apparently had
4 made contact.

5 Then they came down and asked if anybody
6 spoke Chinese as initially the first language there,
7 did anybody speak Chinese.

8 Then, a couple of minutes later, they came
9 down and asked "Does anybody speak Japanese?"

10 Apparently, they had a language problem.
11 Apparently, the people who were now I guess in the
12 life rafts, they were trying to communicate to them
13 and no one spoke English.

14 So they were asking if anybody could speak
15 the language. Nobody could speak Chinese, nobody
16 could speak Japanese. We couldn't help them in that
17 regard.

18 MR. ABE: Before you go on, when the Chief
19 of Staff came down to the torpedo room, what did he
20 say?

21 MR. NOLAN: Well, he was very forthright
22 that, you know, we had hit this other ship. And,
23 well, of course we all knew that because we saw it.
24 And, you know, he was just kind of giving us
25 reports on the rescue.

1 You know, I believe, and again it's not
2 like as clear as a bell to me.

3 MR. ABE: Sure.

4 MR. NOLAN: But --

5 MR. ABE: Anything you have to say will be
6 real helpful.

7 MR. NOLAN: I can remember -- this was kind
8 of after the fact. You know, this was the Coast
9 Guard was on its way. And the Captain had I guess -
10 - this may have even been after the Coast Guard had
11 rescued the--

12 MR. ABE: The Captain being the Chief of
13 Staff?

14 MR. NOLAN: Captain Waddle.

15 MR. ABE: Okay.

16 MR. NOLAN: Because this rang in my mind.
17 And I even think Mr. Thoman had said it in his
18 interview with Matt Lauer.

19 It was that he told everyone that they
20 should each write down what they experienced
21 immediately because it could change. Not to
22 embellish anything...

23 (TAPE CONCLUDED.)